

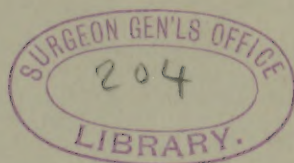
Fowler (E.P.)

President's Address

before the

N. Y. Medico-Chirurgical Society

1882



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BEFORE THE

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BY THE PRESIDENT

DR. E. P. FOWLER

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ADDRESS.

Fellows and Associates of the New York Medico-Chirurgical Society:

First of all, I will ask you to accept my thanks for the honor you conferred upon me in my appointment as the presiding officer of this Society for the current year, and also for the uniform kindness and consideration which I have received in my official capacity. I know of no medical association in this country over which I would deem it a greater honor to preside, and if the amount and quality of labor which this Society has accomplished during its four years of existence be considered, and the pains taken to compare it with the fruits of the first four years of its English patronome, I think it would be accorded that there are reasonable grounds to anticipate a future for this Society as useful and as glorious as has already been won by its ancestor.

I will give a brief *résumé* of comparison:

I. History and Objects of the Society.

We have now thirty-one members; of these, four were, by age, exempted from the obligation of presenting a thesis as one of the requisites for membership. One was elected an honorary member. Twenty-five members have contributed theses.

These papers collectively would rank above the average of medical literature, and some of them exhibit marked ability. Altogether they would make a printed octavo volume of eight hundred and thirty-two pages, including numerous illustrations.

The papers which have been presented to the Society, in addition to the theses, number above seventy, and they would form

two printed octavo volumes of over eight hundred pages each. Many of them are very original and valuable. Of these contributions, about twelve hundred pages have already been printed.

To these must be added the verbal contributions made in the course of our discussions, and which have been preserved with most exceptional faithfulness in the minutes of transactions, by our scholarly secretary, whose able and conscientious labors I am sure we all appreciate. To recapitulate:

During the first four years of this Society the written contributions would make two thousand four hundred large octavo pages of print: twelve hundred pages have already been printed; to this must be added the verbal discussions.

The *Medical and Chirurgical Society of London*, organized in 1805, had at the end of its fourth year (1809) ninety-eight members, and at this date it issued its first volume of transactions, consisting of twenty-one papers, in a small paged octavo volume of two hundred and eighty-nine pages. The matter would make only about one hundred and fifty of our pages. Among the contributors were Abernethy, Cooper, and Jenner.

If, in the organization of this Society, the object had been only to increase by one the multitude of already existing societies, with no distinctive purpose, it would be impossible to offer any plausible apology for its existence. On the contrary, however, it was created with a clearly distinctive purpose. Scarcely anything was more palpable than the fact that we were in the transition between two great epochs of human thought and action in their every department. The days of dogmatic control were virtually ended. No individual name amid scientific workers was any longer so potent that it could command more than a meager company of blind followers, and it was generally recognized that any one who encourages such following, in that degree vitiated his claim as a scientist.

The question to-day is, not what a leader or co-worker thinks or believes: it is, what does he know, and how fully can he demonstrate that knowledge? Mere theories have now just about

as much market value as force, represented by the air that whistles around the house corner.

The aim of this Society was to collect a body of workers, practically untrammelled by the theories or prejudices of the hour, who would be able and willing to investigate life in all its phases, both normal and abnormal, and who possessed the courage of their convictions, and that even yet greater courage which is required to ingenuously acknowledge one's errors and to assist others in avoiding them. It was one of the interests of the Society to avoid and discountenance anything which should share the nature of a trades-union or any degeneration into a clique which might be used as a moral or social coercive power, or any approach to a waste of time, by allowing the entrance of personal matters.

Thus far these interests appear to have been properly guarded. Another object was to realize a Society which would thoroughly examine proposed, as well as already received, ideas in medicine, sift the evidence on which they rest, and, when found, would kindly but fearlessly expose their vulnerable points.

It desired to encourage a method of investigation in medicine which would reject, as not belonging to the nature of testimony, all assertions unsubstantiated by the most ample demonstration.

It anticipated uncompromising war against all kinds of educational shams and against all attempts, from any source, at aggressions upon freedom of individual opinion and expression. With these as the key-notes of our method, there are many questions now before the medical world, and many more to follow which ought to receive from this Society such kind of consideration as would make its influence sensibly and generally acknowledged. In illustration, I may perhaps be permitted to mention two or three of them.

II. Medical Education, and the Right of Personal Opinion.

First, the question of Medical Education: This is at present so much the subject of general consideration, that it may seem almost superfluous to speak of it. But the evil methods and

imperfections, though recognized, are not righted, and the fact is notable, both to the profession and the laity, that as concerns medical degrees dispensed in the United States, it is much the same as the Frenchmen say it is with the badge of the Legion of Honor in France—through its liberal dispensation the conspicuous ones now are those who by some oversight have not had it pressed upon them.

Nothing seems more certain than that if medical degrees continue to be conferred upon the present conditions, it will not be a decade before Americans will be compelled to go outside their own country for any medical degree that will awaken other sentiment than shame, or at least diffidence to the possessor, and ridicule from the public. In saying this I do not, even in mind, cast the least aspersion upon the capabilities of the majority of our medical teachers, than whom there are none in the world naturally more competent. The fault is in our legislation. Among the educational mold and moth permitted and legalized by our learned and classic legislators, no institution which offered a thorough education could survive. Our schools undoubtedly do the best they can in the midst of their surroundings. I may err in my views upon this subject, and I am ready at any moment to throw them aside for better ones, but it seems to me that under no circumstances or form of government should educational institutions be vested with the right to award a bonus consisting of a legal vantage as an inducement to purchasers of their diplomas; that is, they should not be allowed to confer degrees which convey legal rights when such privileges must necessarily assume, or are expressly with, the purpose of a direct money-making business. I can conceive no possible way by which various ultimate misuses of such power could be averted. It would come in the way of reducing the standard of educational requirements; it would show itself by arbitrary and intolerant acts towards the public, and also in the many other ways with which we are already more or less familiar.

Private corporations may have proprietary interest and full control of institutions for education; it is probably right and

better that they should possess the power of issuing diplomas as certificates of general recommendation, and as special recommendation for a final examination; but when legal franchises depend upon the final decision respecting the efficacy of their teaching, this final act should most assuredly be placed beyond the possibility of the teacher's influence, and the legal franchise should come directly from the State. The ultimate examining and certifying Body (in Germany the "*Staats-Examin*"), and the executive, the State, having no proprietary interest in the franchise to be granted, could have no incentive or bias other than towards the adoption and exaction of higher educational requirements as the only means through which the legal privilege could be obtained, and thus at one blow all schools of medical education which failed to supply candidates with the required amount of knowledge would become *moribund*. Schools under such circumstances would furnish a high grade of education, not necessarily as a matter of pride or honesty, but as one of dollars and cents, for however little regard the teachers might have for public welfare, or that of their pupils, their own welfare, the necessity of self-preservation, would insure from them the required degree of instruction; for, failing in this, they would be forced to seek some other calling for which they might chance to be more suitably qualified. In brief, there would remain no practical obstruction to the complete self-enforcement, in schools for medical teaching, of the law of "*the survival of the fittest*."

The accomplishment of this project, or its equivalent, would, moreover, tend incidentally to correct many existing wrongs. It would help to rescue the timid ones from the teeth of the sinister variety of watch-dogs of the profession; the moral obliques, who, by mischance, have found their way into a profession that, through their unfortunate nature, they can neither ennoble nor comprehend, could no longer disseminate untruths in representing, as they now do, that those who differ with them in belief or practice are inferior in education, when, in fact, they, in many instances, sat together upon the same college benches, receiving their edu-

cation and diplomas from the self-same school, and, perhaps, even at the very same moment, in each other's presence. Some of these traducers of to-day are the very teachers who awarded the diplomas to those whom they would defame by denouncing them as professionally ignorant.

One of two things must be granted: these professors must allow that the students whom they graduated were given their diplomas because they were duly educated, or they must acknowledge that their diplomas were, like some others we have heard of, sold for money without reference to education.

When they state that one whom they have graduated, but who afterwards comes to believe and practise differently from themselves, is ill-educated and below the requirements of their college, they simply resort to the most effective way of proclaiming that they are vendors of bogus diplomas.

After the adoption of some plan similar in effect to that I have suggested, the public could not be deceived concerning the *general relative professional education* of medical practitioners, however much their *belief* or *practice* might differ or be the object of denunciation.

The evil we speak of does not confine itself merely to a sentimental outrage; it is a pecuniary injury. The Government has conferred privileges upon these corporations, endowing them, to a certain extent, with teaching facilities more or less exclusive in character, and advantage is taken of this, in a tyrannical endeavor to coerce individual belief through outraging the most common legal rights of their equals—equal in law, and in every *technical* professional respect—by the enforcement of rules and regulations for the management of their schools, which are contrary to common statute law and far below the average level of common enlightenment and justice.

I would be very much gratified to listen to some more effective, practical plan to compel a high grade of both preparatory and professional education, and which would also incidentally suffice to protect the free exercise of individual opinion.

III. *Ætiology.*

Another instance of those subjects which demand renewed energy of investigation is ætiology.

To meet inquiry with words in place of reason, it may be sufficient to say that a malady is caused by congestion, or inflammation by anæmia, or hyperæmia, and the like. The cause of bleed- ing from the nose might be equally explained by saying that it was nasal hemorrhage or epistaxis.

In a great proportion of medical literature, symptoms of disease are given as the cause, and if a demur is made, the reply sometimes is, "Well, if it is not the cause, it is the ultimate fact." Now, a fact which does not explain anything is not an ultimate fact,—if there is such a thing possible as an ultimate fact,—and should never be a satisfying one.

We all agree, doubtless, that disease is an interference in some manner with the natural action, growth, and maturing of an organism. This interference is not generated spontaneously—is not autogenous; it must proceed from something, or from some conditions, outside the body which have either entered into it or affected it by external contact. If the foreign element has actually penetrated the organism, it may or may not, according to circumstances, be able there to reproduce or multiply itself; but if it does so, it is a generation strictly separate from the ordinary conditions constituting the individuality of the organism invaded.

The study of pathology, therefore, in its ordinary sense, is not the study of the causes of disease; it is the study of the phenomena which lead toward the cause. In the ordinary enumerations of the telluric and celestial causes of disease it is quite possible that a large fraction of the sum has hitherto been omitted.

Ancient writers were superstitious, and in the main poor scientists; nevertheless they were good observers. Many of their valuable observations, however, were set aside, and this only because they were linked with absurd explanations; but their facts are as sturdy and sterling as those of our own day, and the later

unfoldings of science are confirming and reinstating even some of their conjectures, which have long been regarded as supreme nonsense.

The old belief, that the destiny of man was, in some mysterious way, determined by the powers of the air, the earth, and the celestial bodies, has a foundation which science is daily making broader and clearer.

That atmospheric conditions, storms, light, darkness, the condition of the earthy components, the influence of the bodies in space, and the like, should determine the welfare and the very existence of organic life, is now, of course, fully recognized by every intelligent observer.

But is not the knowledge of those influences which may furnish or destroy the conditions for life, still in its early twilight? Are there not multiplying upon us glimpses of unexplored and unlimited fields? For example, has the atmospheric ocean, at the bottom of which we live, been subjected to anything more than the most superficial examination? Common storms appear quite simple, and any newly-fledged scholar will glibly furnish you with their causes; but among scientists, even for these there is as yet no generally received theory.

Take also, as another instance, the observations in astronomy, by which we are taught that, within each twenty-four hours, there enter our atmosphere as many as eight millions of meteors, which are visible to the unassisted eye, and that those in addition, which the naked eye cannot perceive, are probably this number many times over. These little pigmy-like planets—it may be the bits of a broken-up or incomplete planet—are along their courses caught in our atmosphere, and by friction with it are burned up.

To more fully realize the magnitude of this one item of the activities about us, and its possible results as concerns living beings upon the earth's surface, let us call to mind the fact that these meteoric bodies move through space at a speed of from ten to forty miles per second, and then place by the side of this fact the formula with which the generation of heat, by atmospheric pressure, is computed.

You will excuse me if I here repeat the law, with which you are all doubtless familiar, or at least have been, namely : *a body, moving through the atmosphere at the rate of one hundred and twenty-five feet per second, will raise the temperature of the air immediately in advance of it one degree Fahrenheit, and the temperature increases in proportion to the square of the velocity of the moving mass.*

It therefore remains, of course, but to ascertain the number of feet per second at which a body moves through the atmosphere : divide this sum by one hundred and twenty-five, square the quotient, and your result indicates the degrees of Fahrenheit which would be obtained.

It thus will be found to result that a body, traversing the atmosphere with a velocity of ten miles per second, would produce a temperature immediately in front of it above one hundred and seventy-eight thousand (178,000) degrees Fahrenheit ; over six hundred thousand (600,000) degrees by a speed of twenty miles per second ; and, at a rate of forty miles per second, the heat produced would considerably exceed two millions and a half degrees Fahrenheit—a heat, the intensity of which transcends all powers of human imagination, as the most intense artificial heat which we at present know how to produce does not—if I am right—exceed four thousand degrees Fahrenheit.

The appalling rapidity with which these objects plunge towards the earth, and the generation of the incidental intense heat which serves to consume them before the second or two of time in which they could reach us, appear then to serve as a sure protection, and as the *only* one against universal destruction of all life and form upon the earth's surface. The next link in this chain of thought brings a consideration as to what may be the effect of these titanic actions carried on at, or near, the surface of the atmospheric ocean. This region could hardly be else than the theatre of storms and convulsions, compared with which any of the so-called cyclones at its base, the surface of the earth, would be calms.

The upper air must be more or less filled with the *débris* gases of burnt meteors ; and these conditions again must be subject to

wide variations, depending upon whether the orbit of the earth is passing near or through a meteoric orbit, etc. It would be a question worthy of observation, also, how far and in what manner the varying state of the sun's surface affects earthly organisms; the same too as regards the moon, comets, and the various other bodies in space. We certainly know that these influences do affect non-vitalized matter, and it would therefore be in the highest degree illogical to deny the probability of any effect upon the constitution of living organisms. We know that there is almost a perfect parallelism between the solar maculae and the magnetic aurora upon the earth, and that these magnetic disturbances will often cause the compass needle to exhibit a variation of from ten to fifteen degrees within an hour's space of time. The disturbances indicated by the dark spots on the solar surface seem to transmit their effects to the earth with about the same rapidity that light travels.

Still, again, we are taught by the tides that the sun and moon exert upon the matter of the earth a force of most majestic proportions in thus heaping up vast bodies of water, and this force must act proportionately upon every atom of earth's matter, vitalized as well as non-vitalized. In what relation does the rhythmic action that pervades all inanimate nature stand to the disposition of periodicity which all disease, and indeed all physiological processes of life, so clearly exhibit? May it not be that in this direction lies hidden the key to the mystery of annual, mensual, hebdominal, and other more minor periodicities in animal life, and in disease? And is it not possible that all manifestations of vitality consist of a series of rhythmic motion—that is, periodicities?

These are only bits of suggestions relating to the macrocosmos—the great Immeasurable which surrounds us; but the microcosmic pendent is equally full of interest and importance.

In this department the germ-study has now enlisted a small army of laborers, and the names of Davaine, Chauveau, Keber, Oertel, Klebs, Obermeier, Ross, Beale, and particularly those of

Pasteur, Joubert, and Duclaux, have drawn about them a host of others, and the field promises momentous results. Researches thus far seem to coincide with the logic of Darwin's views, and to turn the balance against the former supposition of spontaneous generation, even of germs; and should the non-spontaneity view prove correct, it is easy to realize how great a step will have been taken towards measures for simplifying the prevention, at least, of those diseases which result from the introduction and multiplication of these germs in the animal economy; for to interrupt a line of descendants may be possible, but if spontaneous generation lies within the problem, the task must be endless and hopeless, for the multiplication of beginnings might outnumber all possible resources. Is it possible that we shall become able to construct effective barriers against the germs of a large area of disease, or must it ever be that there can occur in any living organism a spontaneous generation of new living beings, whose lives demand the destruction of the body in which they generate?

The practical bearing of this matter, in its main, lies plainly before the eyes; but, cropping out from the main question, there are many incidents filled with instructive and curious suggestions.

The marvellous rapidity with which these germs multiply—the self-destruction resulting from this speedy reproduction—the slight causes which serve to accelerate growth and procreation, as well as to retard or stop the process, these can as well serve to stimulate practical activities as they do to fire the imagination.

Pasteur, Joubert, and Duclaux have ascertained, by experimental observations, that some of the germs which are reproduced by the scission-process require only an average of six minutes for each individual to divide, giving two for one. Calculating upon this basis, it would require scarcely three hours for one individual to exhibit fifteen hundred millions of descendants. The number which would result from twenty-four hours' time could hardly be conveyed by figures—it certainly would be far

beyond the power of finite realization. That they do not increase to the exclusion of every living thing on the earth is from the fact that they so quickly exhaust their supply of surrounding nourishment, and die of starvation.

To those who have interest in matter of dosage, there are also some curious facts connected with germ-culture. For the artificial cultivation of the *aspergillus niger*, M. Raulin has composed a liquid called the "*liquide Raulin*." In a gallon and a half of water are dissolved two and a half ounces of candied sugar, to which are added a few grains of a mixture of tartaric acid, nitrate and phosphate of ammonia, carbonate of potassa and magnesia, sulphate of ammonia, zinc and iron, and silicate of potassa.

Many experiments have been made and recorded respecting the wonderful action produced upon the germs by the introduction of almost infinitesimal quantities of various different substances. Perhaps they are known to you all, and, if so, among others, the one made with the nitrate of silver must have attracted your attention. That the one hundred thousandth of a grain of this salt should destroy, and that almost instantaneously, all the germ life in the gallon and half of liquid seems wonderful; but still more so the fact that the placing of the liquid in a silver vessel will be followed by the same result, although it is almost impossible for chemistry to demonstrate that the silver has imparted to the solution any of its substance.

IV. *Cure and Recovery.*

Turning now in another direction, there is a subject towards which it would seem profitable to direct more earnest attention, and the dealing with it intelligently and radically would, perhaps, be in keeping with the general aims of this Society.

The question is one which involves the life and health of every patient, and the reputation of every medical practitioner. I refer to an adoption of some means by which a clear distinction, capable of a reasonable degree of demonstration, can be made between cures and recoveries.

There is probably very little doubt in the mind of any competent observer that a large number of recoveries are improperly claimed as cures, and although in such cases we may undeservedly gain a little temporary gratitude and praise, this is, nevertheless, greatly outweighed by reproach and mortification meted out and experienced in that great number of cases where chance does not play in our favor; more than this, a self-deception in this matter is a trap which ensnares our own judgment and induces us to trust life to suppositious resources which have no real proven value or existence.

One of the earliest lessons in science is to be deliberate and particular in receiving testimony; and so apparent or alleged results from drug administration should be accepted with the utmost caution; the application is too closely allied to human life and happiness to justify the acceptance of testimony in this connection which is not substantiated by every possible test.

As in mathematics, the process for solution, if true, should work with equal accuracy both ways.

That at this point there exist obstacles beyond those encountered in abstract mathematics, is certainly true, but the residuum of the solution need not be, as it often is at present, much in excess of the product solved. Were the problem not of complex elements, it would be fair to say that if a given disease or process is corrected or abridged by drugs, it would, without drugs, either always continue to exist, or be, to a certain extent, palpably prolonged.

In ascertaining just what is due to drugs and what is not, by the giving or withholding of them—that is, with the knowledge of the patient—can never be a fair mode of deciding with the human being as a subject; for, in human kind, there is a factor in the treatment of disordered processes which, perhaps, is quite as important as the scope of drugs; this is the physical result produced upon the body by the mental conditions excited in the patient.

A patient who, by taking remedies, is stimulated with the belief that he will thereby recover, is much more likely to do so than

one depressed by the feeling that nothing is being done for him, and that his fate is to die unless nature should happen, in some accidental way, to rescue him.

Therefore, in experimenting upon the result of drugs or no drugs, in order to free the test from this mental factor, the individuals submitted to the experiments should, both sets, of course, be equally under the supposition that they are taking real drugs. A necessary preliminary step for the completeness of this investigation, however, would be to obtain a full, general history of disorders as presented with no interruption to their natural course. This descriptive history has been largely added to within the last ten or fifteen years; but, on the other hand, we are very far from possessing a close knowledge of the actual extent of drug-action, excepting, perhaps, some of the grosser forms of toxicoses.

It is no uncommon thing—indeed it is of very frequent occurrence—to chance upon clinical descriptions where the natural course of a disorder and the supposed drug-action are hopelessly confounded. How many remedies have been vaunted for suddenly arresting pneumonia at about the fifth or seventh day of its course, enteric fever at its seventeenth or twenty-first day, of effecting a crisis in variola at about the eleventh day, and so on indefinitely.

The extent to which drugs act as curatives, and the conditions to which their employment is adapted, furnish a subject worthy of a serious attention which it has not yet received.

5. *Homœopathy: Does the term signify anything which really exists?*
—*Nature of Disease.*

Coupled with the inquiry as to the curative or corrective limit of drugs, I will ask permission to offer a proposition for your consideration as to *how* they act, and, consequently, how they are to be selected.

This is a field in which the profession of every age has labored, and every century has produced its more or less complete theories and systems.

Among those, however, who have thus contributed, Hahnemann is the only one who claimed to have discovered a complete system, founded upon immutable laws—in fact, a principle as universal and invariable in therapeutics as the law of gravitation is in matter.

We will preface the proposition in hand with a brief analysis of Hahnemann's system; and, to do this, we will first examine his definition of disease.

Hahnemann does not, as some have asserted, present the symptoms of a disease as the disease itself. In Sections 11 and 12, of the "Organon," he says that what we call disease is the result of the morbidly disturbed vital force, and that the manifestations appreciable to our senses—that is, symptoms—represent the morbid disturbance of the vital force, or *dynamis*.

This is the mode by which the real disease is projected upon our senses, and thus it follows, he says, that when this picture (symptoms), projected upon our senses, is entirely destroyed, it must, with equal certainty, be presumed that there is also restored the integrity of the vital force. Thus the supposed veritable location of disease is distinctly stated as being in the *vital force*, or *dynamis*, and not in the corporeal body. I quote Sections 11 and 12, and the statement is equally distinct in many other sections:

"SEC. 11. *In sickness this spirit-like, self-acting (automatic) VITAL FORCE, omnipresent in the organism, is ALONE PRIMARILY DERANGED BY THE DYNAMIC INFLUENCE of some morbid agency, inimical to life. Only this abnormally modified vital force can excite morbid sensations in the organism, and determine the abnormal functional activity which we call disease.*

"*This force, itself invisible, becomes perceptible only through its effects upon the organism, makes known, and has no other way of making known, its morbid disturbance to the observer and physician than by the manifestation of morbid feelings and functions—THAT IS, BY SYMPTOMS OF DISEASE IN THE VISIBLE MATERIAL ORGANISM*"

"SEC. 12. *Diseases are produced only by the morbidly disturbed vital force [7], hence the manifestations of disease, discernible by our*

senses, at the same time represent every internal change (i. e., the entire morbid disturbance of the *dynamis*), and expose to view, so to speak, the whole disease. It follows that, after the cure of such manifestations of disease, and of all discoverable aberrations from healthy vital functions, their disappearance must necessarily, and with equal certainty, be presumed to result in, and to determine the restoration of the integrity of vital force, and the return of health to the entire organism."

Upon this theory is constructed the theory of dynamic remedies, or, what is termed "*high potencies*"—for it is set forth as an irresistibly logical conclusion—supported, as claimed, by actual practical evidence, that the disease being an immateriality situated in an immateriality, i. e., in the vital force (*dynamis*)—the remedy also must be reduced to a practically immaterial form, otherwise it cannot penetrate the same immaterial region, and therefore cannot enter into relations with the disease. This idea is emphasized in various places, but I will quote only one example:

"SEC. 16. *Our vital force, that spirit-like DYNAMIS, cannot be reached nor affected except by a spirit-like (dynamic) process, resulting from the hurtful influences of hostile agencies from the outer world acting upon the healthy organism, and disturbing the harmonious process of life. Neither can the physician free the vital force from any of these morbid disturbances, i. e., diseases, except, likewise, by spirit-like (dynamic, virtual) alterative powers of the appropriate remedies acting upon our spirit-like vital force, which perceives this remedial power through the omnipresent susceptibility of the nerves of the organism. Thus, healing remedies can, and actually do, restore health and vital harmony only by virtue of their dynamic action upon the vital force, after those changes in the health of the patient (totality of symptoms), perceivable by our senses, have represented the disease to the attentively observing physician as completely as possible for the purpose of its cure.*"

The author then proceeds to arrange all disease under two heads: one class he denominates natural or *dynamic diseases*, and, the other, artificial or *drug diseases*. Both kinds of diseases equally find their location in the vital force (*dynamis*).

As the foundation of his therapeutical structure, he claims it to have been conclusively demonstrated that the diseases styled "*natural*" are not cured, or rarely so, by nature; that the vital force is not able to eject them; that they are not self-limiting; whereas those diseases, classed as "*drug diseases*," are self-limiting, or that the vital force can easily overcome them, and that they are naturally of short duration.

It is held by him as demonstrated, also, that drug disease is much more powerful than natural disease, and by this reason capable of forcibly displacing natural disease.

The proper direction taken by this force depends upon the equally-proven fact (claimed) that for some unknown reason any certain natural disease has an affinity for a definite region of the vital force, and also that any drug, being similar in its nature (as shown by the symptoms it produces) to the natural disease, it too has an affinity for the same region, and the cure is performed through the superior natural strength of the drug impersonality which drives out the natural disease, as there is not room for both, and then the drug disease either ends spontaneously, or is easily driven out by the more than usually roused *vital force*.

It is upon this ground that Hahnemann bases the law for selecting medicinal agents which have the greatest possible similarity to the manifestation of the natural disease to be cured.

This embraces the essentials of Hahnemann's theory of disease and the mechanism or modality of its cure.

That I have fairly represented the anatomy of this part of Hahnemann's "*Organon*," I think no one, who is well acquainted with it, will dispute.

I will nevertheless substantiate it by the following quotations:

"Sec. 26. *This is based upon that homœopathic law of nature which, hitherto unacknowledged, though not unrecognized, had ever been the foundation of every real cure. In the living organism a weaker dynamic affection is permanently extinguished by a stronger one, if the latter (deviating in kind) is very similar in its manifestation to the former.*"

In a foot-note he illustrates the idea by the disappearance of the brilliant planet Jupiter through the greater brilliancy of the sun. The illustration, if continued to its completion, is not a very happy one, for if the light of Jupiter represents the dynamic disease, and the sunlight the more powerful drug disease, the latter, in fulfilment of the promise, should not merely hide the dynamic disease (Jupiter), but should destroy it, so that when the powerful drug disease (sunlight) subsided, Jupiter would not reappear in all its former glory, or in any degree, whatever; this would be no cure; it would be, at most, but a miserable temporary concealment.

"SEC. 27. Therefore, the healing power of medicines rests upon their faculty of producing symptoms similar to the disease, and superior to it in strength, so that each individual case of disease is most certainly, fundamentally, and rapidly extinguished and cancelled by a drug which is more potent than the disease, and capable of producing, in the body, symptoms most similar to and completely resembling the totality of those of the disease."

"SEC. 29. We have seen that every disease (not subject to surgery alone) is based upon some particular morbid derangement in the feelings and functions of the vital force; and thus, in the process of a homoeopathic cure, by administering a medicinal potency chosen exactly in accordance with the similitude of symptoms, a somewhat stronger, similar, artificial morbid affection is implanted upon the vital power deranged by a natural disease; this artificial affection is substituted (as it were) for the weaker, similar, natural disease (morbid excitation), against which the instinctive vital force, now only excited to stronger effort by the drug affection, needs only to direct its increased energy; but, owing to its brief duration, it will soon be overcome by the vital force, which, liberated first from the natural disease, and, finally, from the substituted artificial (drug) affection, now again finds itself enabled to continue the life of the organism in health. This very probable process is based upon the following propositions:

"SEC. 30. Natural diseases are cured and overcome by proper medicines, because the health of the human body seems to be more

readily affected by drugs (also because it is in our power to regulate their dose) than by natural morbid agencies."

"SEC. 34. *The great intensity of artificial diseases produced by drugs does not constitute the only condition of their ability to cure natural diseases. In order to perform a cure, it is necessary that drugs should possess the power of producing in the human body an ARTIFICIAL DISEASE, most similar to that which is to be cured, for it is, by virtue of its similitude, combined with greater intensity, that the drug disease is substituted for the natural disease, thus depriving the latter of its power to affect the vital force. This is true, to such an extent, that even nature herself is unable to cure an older disease through the accession of a new, dissimilar affection, even of great intensity; nor can the physician perform a cure by means of drugs incapable of producing in the organism a diseased condition similar to that which is to be cured"*

"SEC. 148. *A medicine possessing the power and inclination to produce similar symptoms, or an artificial disease most similar to the natural disease to be cured, exerts its dynamic influence upon the morbidly-disturbed vital force; and if it is administered in well-proportioned doses, it will affect those parts of the organism where the natural disease is located, and will excite in them an artificial disease; this, by virtue of its great similitude and increased intensity, will now occupy the place hitherto held by the natural morbid process. Thereupon the instinctive and automatic vital power is liberated from the natural disease, and is occupied alone with the stronger and similar drug disease. But owing to the minuteness of the dose, this drug affection is sufficiently tractable to allow itself to be overcome by the increased energy of the vital force, and will, therefore, soon vanish, leaving the body free from disease and permanently healthy."*

Having thus established the nature and locus of disease, Hahnemann proceeds to demonstrate, as he terms it, the only possible method by which it can be exterminated, and this, he finds, can only be accomplished by dispossession (see Sec. 26), and the dispossession can be executed by only two different sets of agents. One agent is a "natural disease," of such kind as to act homœopathically: this, he says (Sec. 34), is rare; the other,

a drug disease. Except by means of these two, he makes the repeated and unqualified statement that no instance of cure has ever existed or can exist—that the law is immutable and invariable. In Section 50 he excepts a few miasmatic diseases as curative auxiliaries. I will rest the matter upon his own words.

In Section 25 he says: "*But now actual experience, the only infallible oracle of medical art, teaches in every carefully-conducted experiment that that drug, proved in its effect upon healthy persons, to produce the greatest number of symptoms similar to those found in a case of disease to be cured, and when administered in properly potentiated and diminished doses, will rapidly, thoroughly, and permanently cancel and turn into health the totality of symptoms of this diseased condition; that is the entire present case of disease.*

"Experience also teaches that all drugs will UNEXCEPTIONALLY cure diseases, the symptoms of which are as similar as possible to those of the drugs, AND LEAVE NONE UNCURED."

Again, in Section 34: "*This is true, to such an extent, that even nature herself is unable to cure an older disease through the accession of a new, dissimilar affection, even of great intensity; nor can the physician perform a cure by means of drugs incapable of producing in the organism a diseased condition similar to that which is to be cured.*"

And Section 35: "*The most powerful drugs, if not homœopathic, will be unable to cure any disease whatever.*"

Section 45, referring to drug agents, says: "*On the contrary, two diseases, though different in kind, but very similar in regard to their manifestation of suffering and symptoms, will always extinguish each other whenever they meet in the organism; the stronger disease will overcome the weaker one, for reasons not difficult to divine; the superadded stronger morbidic potency, on account of its similitude of effect, takes possession chiefly of the same parts in the organism hitherto affected by the weaker, morbidic agency; this is thereby deprived of its power of action, and is consequently extinguished. In other words, as soon as the vital force, disturbed by the morbidic potency hitherto acting upon it, is more powerfully affected by the new and most similar (but stronger, dynamic) morbidic potency, the latter continues alone to*

affect the vital force ; and, in this manner, the former similar but weaker agency, being a mere dynamic power without substance, must consequently cease to exist, and hence cease to exert its morbid influence upon the vital force."

And in Section 48 he says : "*All of these examples prove that neither the efforts of nature nor of the physician have ever been able to extinguish or cure a disease by means of a dissimilar morbid potency, however powerful ; but they prove that, according to eternal and irrevocable laws of nature, which were hitherto misinterpreted, cures are made to result ALONE FROM A MORBID POTENCY, WHICH IS SIMILAR IN SYMPTOMS AND SOMEWHAT SUPERIOR IN STRENGTH.*"

In Section 22 he says : "*Drugs become curative remedies, capable of obliterating disease only through their power of creating certain disturbances and symptoms—that is, by producing a certain artificial diseased condition, they cancel and exterminate the symptoms already present, i. e., the natural diseased condition which it is intended to cure.*"

See Section 61, reading as follows : "*No physician ever effected a permanent cure of an inveterate disease, unless some drug of PRE-DOMINANT homœopathic effect had been by chance embodied in his prescription.*"

Here Hahnemann seems to introduce a doctrine which one of our Fellows has recently developed to its logical sequence ; namely, that in the administration of a combined number of drugs, the *predominant homœopathic one* will proceed to effect the cure, and, as the transient character of a drug disease—homœopathically chosen and dynamically prepared—is made by Hahnemann to depend upon its minuteness of dose (see Sec. 68), why should not the dozen or hundred minute dissimilar drug diseases, produced by the many non-homœopathic elements in the prescription, be as readily disposed of by the *dynamic* as the one *similar* disease ? This, however, though Hahnemannian, is not chiefly relevant to our subject.

In Section 52 the author of the "Organon" says that, when two dissimilar diseases meet in the human organism, they are never cured, but always aggravated. But Section 37 seems some-

what an offset to it, for in that he says the disease will remain uncured unless it be *too harshly treated* with the dissimilar drugs ; which is virtually admitting that dissimilars do—at least sometimes—cure, only that, to do so, they must act with undesirable violence ; it must be kept in mind, however, that we are occupied with a law—the law of cure—and not with preferences in treatment and pharmacy.

Section 54 settles the question again the other way, and in a way preclusive of all further discussion. It reads :

“SEC. 54. *As above intimated (43-49), the course PURSUED BY HOMŒOPATHY must be the only correct one ; because, of the three ways in which it is possible to apply medicines in diseases, it is the only direct one leading to a gentle, certain, and permanent cure, without subsequent ill effects or debility. The true homœopathic method of cure is the only correct, the only direct, and the only possible means to be employed by human skill, as surely as it is possible to draw but one straight line between two given points.*”

From the foregoing it seems most clearly palpable that the theory of homœopathic cure is based upon the assumption that disease is an abstract entity, actually occupying a given locality, as one may occupy a room in a house, and can only be cured or excluded by some other more crowding entity, but so nearly like in constitution, character, and habits, that it finds the same quarters—and no others—adapted to the necessities of its existence.

It seems hardly possible that any one, previously unbiased, can make a thorough analysis of Hahnemann's “Organon,” in its entirety, without a conviction that he held disease as being entirely independent of and different from the ordinary processes characterizing vitalized matter. He apparently looked upon disease, not as a variation of a natural process ; he treats of it rather as holding a relation to the human body much like that which genii were once supposed to sustain towards inanimate objects. This is an outline sketch of Hahnemann's system of homœopathy. The “Organon” explicitly teaches that to cure one disease, it is necessary to produce another.

The term "homœopathy" was constructed by Hahnemann, and it etymologically expresses his theory : he was an expert linguist, and would not have coined a term which etymologically misrepresented the idea he wished to express.

One disease can be cured only through displacement by another disease : this is the substructure of homœopathy.

Hahnemann proceeds to claim that homœopathy differs from all other medical systems in that they have no substantiation beyond theory ; whereas homœopathy is a science established by induction — a science *a posteriori* : and, upon this ground alone, are we asked to accept it. (See Sections 25, 26.)

Now, the only material in the "Organon" which is put forward as inductive facts is to be found in Sections 36 to 46 inclusive.

These facts number just thirty-seven—*twenty-one* to establish as an immutable law that dissimilar diseases do not cure each other, and *sixteen* to establish the law that similar diseases do cure each other. These thirty-seven citations are simply references ; there is not one pretended description among them.

With one exception, they are second or third-handed, and some of them are derived from very questionable authority. With these, as the sole inductive material, follow Sections 47, 48, reading as follows :

"SEC. 47. *The preceding examples contain the most distinct and convincing argument in regard to the kind of artificial, morbidic potency (medicine) to be chosen by the physician, in order to accomplish rapid and permanent cures, according to the process observed in the course of nature.*"

"SEC. 48. *All of these examples prove that neither the efforts of nature, nor of the physician, have ever been able to extinguish or cure a disease by means of a dissimilar morbidic potency, however powerful ; but they prove that, according to ETERNAL AND IRREVOCABLE LAWS OF NATURE, which were hitherto misinterpreted, cures are made to result alone from a morbidic potency, which is similar in symptoms and somewhat superior in strength.*"

When this inductive science comes to the relations between *dynamis* and corporeal matter, it becomes lost and announces a

preclusion of all further knowledge in that direction with the remark (see foot-note to Sec. 12): "*It is useless for the physician to know how the vital force brings about or creates the morbid manifestations of the organism, and, THEREFORE, it will ever remain obscure.*"

Such kinds of proclamations are sufficiently refuted and disposed of by every advancing step which science has ever taken.

Every unfolding of the human mind proclaims that there is nothing in the universe concealed from man; but that all things lie open before him, and he is capable of beholding them in proportion as he develops his faculties which God gave him to use.

To jump at a conclusion or theory, unsubstantiated, and by the author avowedly unsusceptible of substantiation, may serve in some departments of mental exercise, but it certainly is the antithesis of science, and therefore we must, as workers in science, hold the "*dynamis*" speculation in reserve until it, at least, makes a pretension to offer some kind of a solution; meanwhile it is proper, I presume, to continue examination, in order to ascertain if there is any simpler and comprehensible solution in any other direction. And for this, is it necessary that one go outside the limits of physiological acts to explain any process whatever connected with vital physics—is it possible to find any explanation elsewhere?

If noxious substances (non-parasitical) received by a vital organism from the surrounding elements find their ultimate habitation in the "*dynamis*," the "*vital force*," the spiritual, and not the corporeal nature, then the same ought, in all probability, to be true of the roast-beef which goes into the stomach along with the noxious element, or the drug; for combinations with injuriously-acting substances, malaria, drugs, or what not, must be accomplished—indeed, can only be brought about, so far as we are able to judge, by our present knowledge—through material physiological processes. So that viewed abstractly, the process for receiving poisons (non-parasitical)—be they "mala-

rial" or drug—is identical with that of nutrition: the only difference seems to be that the one regards chiefly molecular life; the other, molecular life as it relates to somatic life.

Pathology is now regarded as strictly a part of physiology; a pathological condition must always be a result of physiological action, though unsuitable to the particular welfare of that special organism, as a whole, in which it occurs; but so far as its action extends it is admitted, and taught by the pathologists of the present day, as a physiological struggle for survival, and it seems among the possibilities that Hahnemann may have mistaken the struggle for survival, as expressed by symptoms, for a something foreign to the nature of the body, the same as it is among the possibilities that he mistook the curative action of a similar as consisting of the creation of another disease similar in manifestation, but, as he expressly says, Section 26, "*without being of the same species,*" and having an independent power to expel the more puny inmate of the habitation he is sent to visit.

If the substitution of a new disease is required to expel an existing one, it is very perplexing to explain or comprehend how the chain can be broken, and why there should not be equal necessity for an endless succession of similar diseases—to tumble a disease off at one end, a new one must ever be crowded in at the other, and each one must be more energetic than the preceding.

Sections 51 and 68 embrace essentially all the explanation which Hahnemann offers concerning the final disappearance of the drug disease, after it has driven out the so-called natural disease; but as he has nowhere attempted to solve the problem why this drug disease, being sufficiently powerful to drive out the natural disease, against which it is employed to do battle, should, at the same time, be really so much weaker in its resistance to the *dynamis*, I also will abstain from any conjecture, and, in pursuance of a convenient and respectably old fashion, will at once eliminate it from the domain of science, concluding that it is—borrowing a sentence from Section 14—in some way, "*quite in accordance with the infinite goodness of divine wisdom.*"

It is for all this, however, none the less a severe tax upon reason.

The adaptation of similars (not similar disease) to the processes of nature is one that has attracted more or less attention since the origin of medicine, and medical literature of all ages is filled with illustrations of it.

But this, according to the term and in accordance with the repeated vehement avowal of the author of the term "homœopathy," is not homœopathy, but the exact reverse of it. Homœopathy, he is careful to emphasize, is the introduction of a new disease.

Hahnemann was no believer in cures by nature, other than when nature, by rare chance, introduced a new, similar disease for the purpose; he was no believer in *reparative similars*, only in similar diseases.

His attitude towards nature alternated between contempt and hostility, and his condemnation of nature as a curative agent is frequent and vehement. It is especially conspicuous in his introduction to the "Organon," where he repeatedly asserts that nature seldom, if ever, makes a cure, even a bungling one.

I quote the following :

"The crude efforts of nature in acute, and more particularly in chronic diseases, are extremely imperfect, and in themselves a disease" (p. 33, "Organon").

"What man of sense would undertake to imitate nature in her endeavors of coming to the rescue? These efforts are, in fact, the disease itself" (p. 34, "Organon").

He terms it a "*crude, unreasonable automatic vital energy*" (p. 29, "Organon").

The *dynamis*, or vital-force theory of Hahnemann was one which had come to him by regular descent. The idea had, in some form, been inculcated from Paracelsus down. Descartes promulgated virtually the same doctrine, and located the soul in the pineal gland.

Van Helmont had a supreme archéus and a sub-archéus for each different organ.

Stahl held that *anima* presided over and specially directed nu-

trition and all the movements of the physical organism. Fernel, two hundred years prior to Hahnemann, was one of the few who took an opposite stand ; he said : “ *The remote cause of disease is in the humors, the disease itself in the solids ; the symptoms are in the functions ; therefore, it is necessary to seek for disease in the solids, and not in the humors or functions.*”

Homœopathy, in its Hahnemannian sense, is the last stronghold of that theory which, for centuries, held sway in philosophy, and which is, under varying names, known as the vitalistic theory. As applied to the mysteries of vital processes, and to psychology, it possesses a wonderful fascination, through the apparent tangibility which it gives them ; it converts to substantives all the verbs of natural processes, and the spiritual theory of vitalists thus becomes materialism in its very essentiality.

From Paracelsus down to Stahl and Hahnemann, the theory of *vital force*, *archæus*, *anima*, *dynamis*, etc., had a continuous line of advocates, each one modifying the idea in accordance with his mental idiosyncrasy, and, of them all, perhaps no one was more conspicuous and definite in expression than Hahnemann. He, to a greater extent than any other comparatively modern author in medicine, made abstract entities of disease and the vital force.

The immediate source of Hahnemann's theory is easily discernible. Stahl died but twenty-one years before Hahnemann's birth, and his theory of *anima*, even to Hahnemann's adult age, and especially during his impressionable period of life, retained a powerful hold upon the medical world, and Hahnemann evidently received his bent in philosophy from Stahl.

Stahl mixed metaphysical speculation with facts. Hahnemann did the same. Hahnemann partook so largely of the age that was behind him, that he was profoundly erudite, and so little of the age that was to come after him, that he was not scientific.

I assume that no one, with a liberal present-day education in vital science, holds that any of the processes which characterize vitalized matter are other than physiological actions inherent to the organism in which they occur ; and whether the processes are

calculated to maintain the integrity of that body as a whole, or apply to only parts of it, does not alter the principle.

Conservative or reparative processes cannot be brought within the narrow limits of applying solely to the uses of an organism as a whole.

These processes may be adapted and restricted to parts, and, in the fulfilment of this purpose, the organism, as a whole, may eventually suffer destruction—as we see exemplified in cardiac hypertrophy, where the muscle is developed to a degree that destroys life in order to compensate for obstruction, or for valvular insufficiency.

I assume that the members of this Society coincide with the scientific world generally, that all modalities of force are strictly correlates; that we agree, if a disease ever comes to a cure, even without purposed intervention, it must be as the result of some modality of force, and, in accordance with the generally-accepted view that all force is correlated, it must follow that any two modalities of force which accomplish the same ultimate must be parallel and not opposite, and the only possible corollary is, that drugs only cure when they exert a force which is parallel, and not opposite and antagonistic, to the force which nature to that purpose exhibits.

In other words, a similar to curative symptoms will assist to cure; a similar to destructive symptoms will help to destroy.

I assume that Tyndall expresses our sentiments when he says that any term conveying a theory is unsuited to a science vocabulary; and I think that I have this evening adduced sufficient testimony to prove that the term “homœopathy” does convey a theory, and that its inventor intended it to do so, instead of constructing it as a convenient working-hypothesis or term. If it were used with the last-named purpose, it would still be open to the objection that it must compel a commencement of reasoning from a standpoint radically opposed to general operations in nature, and that its rules would permit only such work as would be unavoidably faulty in construction and misleading in tendency.

With the foregoing I respectfully, but in deep earnest, submit to you :

1st. That in justice to its originator, the term "homœopathy" cannot be used in any other sense than that which he explicitly indicated ; and no one has a right to demand or expect that the general profession or the public shall attach to it any other than the correct, etymological meaning which its learned author himself did.

2d. That the term "homœopathy" does not, in any degree, contain the idea of a system for the selection of medicines ; it simply contains the theorem that an existing disease must be cured by the introduction of another disease. The selection of the remedy is a corollary, and comes under another head.

3d. That any doctrine teaching that diseases and the actions of drugs or poisons are abstract entities or non-entities, belongs to the mythology or fairy tales of medical history, far away from the known facts of physiology.

4th. That the theory, contained in the term, is not to any appreciable extent entertained at the present day ; that it does misrepresent the mass of those who allow it to be used to distinguish their belief or practice, and that a proper regard for a correct appreciation of their intelligence by the public, and of honesty in themselves, demands that the term be put away in the garret, as worn-out medical furniture, which has no fitting space in the edifice of real science.

5th. I submit to you whether it would not more nearly accord with the results of recent physiological research to consider disease as consisting of natural physiological processes, which give discomfort, and are destructive because they are unsuited to the habits of the organism in which they occur ; in other words, *disease is unadapted physiological action.*

Joined with what I have said, I wish to pay unreserved tribute to Hahnemann's great learning and labor, and to express the fullest appreciation of all those real contributions which he made to science.

I would not do aught to the man, who reposes voiceless in his

grave, which I would consider unjust or unkind were our positions reversed. I only propose such changes as I feel sure Hahnemann himself would desire, if he were now in the body and surrounded with all the changes which have been wrought by the most eventful hundred years that science has ever traversed.

I will not venture further encroachment upon your time and, perhaps, your patience.

For four years we have labored together, and we have been exceptionally blessed that our number has not been diminished by the hand of death : but the time is not far when this little band, gathered here to-night, will each render his mortal portion to be strewn in the earth with the illustrious ones who founded the society of which this is the namesake.

Loving friends may cherish our memories for a while, and granite blocks may be placed to show coming generations where our bodies lie crumbling, but the acts of affection will vanish along with the disappearance of those who have known us, and the granite mass will, so sure as time, be crumbled and powdered into dust as indistinguishable as will be that of our bodies.

Our labors in this Society, however, like other inscribed deeds of mankind, will survive the solid granite, and will endure until man has lost the art of transmitting his knowledge, or until the world has become a worn-out waste, awaiting nature's renewal.

This immortality of our deeds results not from our desire or will. Once written, by us, upon the scroll of time, and it is beyond possible recall. Its reading may be satisfactory to us, or it may not : by our works alone can we predetermine its nature and quality.

I trust that our labors, as individuals and as a society, will be given to truth, unfettered by passing prejudices, and that by this our imperishability may bear a seal forever worthy of imitation.

